

Remarks

Claims 1-37 are pending in the subject application. Of those claims, claims 5-10 and 22-24 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 33-37 are new.

Claims 5, 8 and 22 have been amended from dependent form into independent form. In view of section 5 of the Office Action, these claims should now be in condition for allowance. The claims have not been narrowed or limited by this amendment. Accordingly, claims 5-10 and 22-24 are believed to be condition for immediate allowance and such favorable action is respectfully requested.

Remaining claims 1-4, 11-21 and 25-32 were rejected in the outstanding Office Action. In particular, claims 16-18, 25 and 28 were rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Herron (US 6193565). Claims 1-4, 11-15, 19-21, 26-27 and 29-32 were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Herron in view of Goto (US 5044996). The Examiner is requested to reconsider these rejections.

Independent claims 1, 16, 25, 28 and 32 have been amended to recite, in part, that the body has a "general C-shaped cross section." As described in the specification at page 5, lines 3-18, the general C shaped cross section allows conductors A, B to be inserted into the connector 10 through the substantially open top side of the connector.

In contrast, Herron discloses a splicing connector comprising a connector shell having a general "H-shaped" cross section which defines a first conductor receiving channel and a second conductor receiving channel opposite of the first conductor receiving channel (Abstract; Col. 3, lines 21-40; Fig. 3C). Herron further discloses that the "H-shaped configuration of the connector shell also allows for rapid and inexpensive fabrication by forging or die cast" (Col.6, lines 51-54).

Herron does not disclose or suggest an electrical conductor splice connector, as recited in independent claims 1, 16 and 25, comprising, in part, a "body comprising a general C-shaped cross section." Nor does Herron disclose or suggest a method of assembling an electrical conductor splice connector including all of the features recited in independent claims 28 and 32.

Similarly, Goto does not disclose or suggest Applicants' claimed electrical conductor splice connector and method of assembling an electrical conductor splice connector, whether Goto is viewed alone or in combination with Herron. For example, Goto merely teaches a two-part wedge connector. The wedge 12 includes body member 18 having converging sides 20 provided with outwardly facing concave grooves, as shown in Fig. 1. Member 14 located over wedge 12 includes shell member 42 whose sides 44 have been rolled over to define channels 48, as shown in Fig. 6 of Goto. Applicants respectfully assert that there is no teaching or suggestion in either Herron or Goto that would motivate one skilled in the art to combine and then modify the teachings of these references in an attempt to arrive at the present claims.

All of the features of independent claims 1, 5, 8, 16, 22, 25, 28 and 32 are not disclosed or suggested in the art of record. Therefore, these claims are patentable and should be allowed. Similarly, dependent claims 2-4, 6-7, 9-15, 17-21, 23-24, 26-27 and 29-31 depend directly or indirectly from an allowable independent claim and are therefore allowable by definition.

New dependent claims 33-37 also have been added to further claim features of Applicants' invention, as supported by the specification at page 10. No new matter has been added to the application.

For at least the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that application is in condition for immediate allowance. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and allowance is respectfully requested. Should any unresolved issue remain, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' Representative at the telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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